Sharia-Compliant Wills: The Latest Islamic Fear-Mongering Nonsense

infotextmanuscripts.org/djetc/av-s-wills.html

Every so often the media runs some unthinking scare story without bothering to check its facts; this happens both sides of the Atlantic the world over.

Sharia or Shariah. Most Moslems are said to be in favour of it. Surprise, surprise.

Sometimes though the scaremongering is based on rather more than poor or non-existent research. The claim last month by the *Daily Mail* that Labour bigwig Harriet Harman had been “linked” to a paedophile group in the 1970s is one example of a smear that was anything but innocent. Now, the pendulum has swung full circle with a scare story about Sharia law being implemented in the UK.

One of the mainstream media outlets that parroted this claim was the London commuter freesheet *Metro*. According to its correspondent Evan Bartlett, Islamic legal principles are to be integrated into UK law for the first time”.

Quoting the *Sunday Telegraph* – a “heavy” that should know better, he whines “New guidance from the Law Society will allow solicitors to write wills that can deny women an equal share of inheritance and exclude ‘non-believers’ altogether while still being compliant with British law”.

As Mr Bartlett is clearly the right side of 50 – and possible the right side of 19 – he will presumably not be writing his will for some time. Surely though he knows what a will is? It is a legal document that provides for the disposal of the property of a deceased on his (or her) departure from this Earth.

In England and most other countries a testator can bequeath property to anybody, including a non-human personality (like a charity). A will is a legal document, and as such must be proved. This is known as probate. The will must be proved to be genuine; serial killer Harold Shipman forged the will of his last victim, Mrs Grundy. The will must be proved to be the last will; for example, if a man’s wife dies before him, he may make another will. Sometimes people fall out, so a friend or family member may be cut out of a will.

If a man dies leaving his wife nothing, or if a father cuts his children out of his will for no apparent reason, it may be challenged. If you don’t understand why, think Anna Nicole Smith.

In his aforementioned article, Evan Bartlett quotes Baroness Cox who is said to be leading a campaign to protect women from religiously sanctioned discrimination. The implementation of Sharia-compliant wills “violates everything that we stand for” and “would make the suffragettes turn in their graves.”

Discrimination? A man entitled to “discriminate”. A testator of sound mind who chooses to cut his floozy of a daughter or drunkard of a son out of his will is not discriminating, he is exercising his will. Ditto a woman who leaves nothing to the sister with whom she had been at loggerheads for the past decade.

At the same time this non-story about Sharia-compliant wills was going the rounds, the same publications have reported that multimillionaire John Roberts has announced he will leave all his money to charity rather than to his five offspring. He does not appear to have named the charities concerned, but many people would consider this ill-advised. One UK charity has over 500 office staff in London, and pays its top people telephone number salaries. Others in the UK, the US and elsewhere boast similar packages; the charity is in the giving. If Mr Roberts desires truly to help the poor he would be far better advised to hand out money to them directly. If he did that, it would be charities rather than Evan Bartlett and Baroness Cox who would be querying his wisdom.

Thankfully, not everyone has fallen for this Sharia-compliant nonsense. Writing in the *Evening Standard*, Sam Leith points out that the technical term for a Sharia-compliant will in the UK is “a will” because “We have the principle...that you can leave your money to whom you damn well like.”Amen. Or should that be Āmīn?

[The above article was published originally on March 26, 2014 with the captioned photograph. On December 22, 2024, one or two very minor corrections were made to the text. The PDF file linked from within this article was also added. It was downloaded from the Internet; initially I quoted from the hard copy to which I do not currently have access but the text appears to be precisely the same.]